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DORGAN SAYS CROP INSURANCE LEGISLATION WILL PROVIDE A HUGE BOOST TO FAMILY FARMERS IN NORTH DAKOTA

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan said Wednesday the crop insurance reform conference report that will be voted on by the U.S. Senate tomorrow will provide a huge boost to family farmers in North Dakota with substantial disaster payments to compensate for collapsed grain prices. Dorgan said the reforms of the crop insurance program are significant.

Dorgan noted that two other items in the legislation are also very important to family farmers. The legislation includes disaster aid that will total over \$240 million for North Dakota farmers alone to compensate them during this period of collapsed prices. In addition, the legislation requires the payout of the money that is in escrow as a result of the Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) lawsuit which farmers won. That suit is being appealed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but this legislation will force the payout of over \$40 million that has been sitting in escrow.

Dorgan said that both Senator Kent Conrad, who was on the conference committee, and Congressman Earl Pomeroy played significant roles to achieve this compromise.

Dorgan said that while this aid will be very helpful, it underscores the need for basic farm policy reform. "This will be the third year in a row that we've had to provide disaster assistance to make up the deficiencies that exist in the current Freedom to Farm bill," Dorgan said. "In addition to this disaster assistance, I hope the Congress can change the Freedom to Farm law so that farmers will have some long term hope, with a safety net that really works."

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